

Story 2176 (1999 Tape 13)

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Educating Educators

A teacher from Ankara was assigned to work in a rural area of Erzincan Province. He proceeded at once to the village where his job was located.

On the first day of classes every child arrived at the school with a block of tezek¹ under his arm. Unacquainted with tezek, the new teacher said to one of his pupils, "Son, what are those blocks which you and the other children have brought?"

"It is tezek, my teacher," the boy answered. Several students then filled the stove with tezek and lighted it. The burning tezek raised the temperature in the school to a comfortable level

At the end of his first day's work, the teacher wrote

¹Much of the Middle East is too arid to sustain the growth of trees. With wood unavailable for fuel, and with oil and gas inaccessible until recently, people resorted to the use of dried animal dung for fuel. This practice also prevailed in other parts of the world. On the treeless plains of much of the American West, "buffalo chips" provided much of the fuel for heating and cooking in frontier camps until the 20th century.

Story 2176

a letter to the Minister of Education at Ankara. "We do not have coal or oil or wood to use in our schoolhouse here. Our bodies are kept warm instead by the use of tezek."

As the teacher had been, the Minister of Education also unacquainted with the nature of tezek. He wrote back, "What is tezek? How many calories does tezek contain?"

The teacher replied, "Tezek is dried animal dung. It has no calories, but it is plentiful here in Erzincan."